



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
STAFF REPORT

PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

DATE OF HEARING: December 18, 2008

CPAM 2008-0001, Heritage Preservation Plan

DECISION DEADLINE: At the Pleasure of the Board

ELECTION DISTRICT: Countywide PROJECT PLANNER: John Merrithew

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Board of Supervisors adopted the Heritage Preservation Plan as a component of the County's General Plan on December 15, 2003 and directed staff to produce a final Plan document. However, on January 5, 2004, the succeeding Board directed that staff not implement or reference the document in any regard.

In 2008, the current Board reaffirmed the Plan and directed staff to implement the Plan as a component of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission was asked to review the document and suggest any updates and minor editorial changes deemed necessary. Between February and July of 2008, the Commission conducted its review and presented the Board with suggested changes. The most significant change is the addition of language and policies addressing Civil War battlefields. On October 7, 2008, the Board accepted the proposed changes and initiated this Plan Amendment.

SUGGESTED MOTIONS

1. I move that the Planning Commission forward CPAM 2008-0001, the Heritage Preservation Plan, to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation of approval based on the findings included in the staff report.
- Or
2. I move that the Planning Commission forward CPAM 2008-0001, the Heritage Preservation Plan, to the Committee of the Whole for further discussion.
- Or
3. I move an alternate motion.

I. FINDINGS

1. The proposed amendments are consistent with the objectives of the Revised General Plan and the Heritage Preservation Plan.
2. The amendments do not change the goals or strategies of existing policies.
3. The amendments promote the preservation of identified Civil War battlefields.

II. PROJECT REVIEW

A. Background: The 2003 Planning Effort

In 2002, the Board of Supervisors appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to chart a course for the implementation of the Revised General Plan's Heritage Resource Policies (Chapter 5) through a draft Countywide Heritage Resources Preservation Plan (the Preservation Plan). The approach of the Preservation Plan is balance three elements: *preservation and conservation* of resources, *education and interpretation* of resources, and *development and promotion* of heritage resources through tourism. These elements ensure the integrity of cultural resource preservation by taking advantage of the symbiotic relationship between these elements, to foster and fund the Preservation Plan initiatives.

Work by a citizens advisory committee consisting of people with knowledge and experience in various fields of preservation began in February 2003 and concluded in December 2003 with Board action to adopt the Preservation Plan. During that 11-month period, the CAC reviewed a series of papers elaborating on issues or opportunities and alternative solutions.

The issues and topics that form the policy chapters of the Heritage Preservation Plan come directly from the Revised General Plan. However, with each topic, the Committee solicited additional input from practitioners from other jurisdictions, non-profit groups and individuals with experience in the particular topic area. Two public comment sessions were conducted in March 10 and September 9, 2003 along with a number of stakeholder meetings.

There are a number of organizations involved in heritage and historic protection efforts in the County (several were represented on the Plan Committee). It was also clear that preservation success continues to rely on private sector efforts. The principle implementation recommendation of the Plan is the formation of a *Heritage Commission* with representatives of stakeholder groups that can link government and private efforts. The Plan recognizes tourism and other ventures that encourage continued use and adaptive reuse of heritage properties as effective preservation opportunities.

During the Preservation Plan process, the County received Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. This important

designation made available the opportunity for additional Federal funding. Since the Plan adoption, the County has used this funding to develop an interactive web site introducing people to the County's historic districts and to complete an update of the Historic District Design Guidelines.

Changes made to the County's Land Management Information System (LMIS) make finding historic data easier for staff and the public. The County is able now to incorporate the inventory from the State's database into the Geographic Information System for use in future analytical work.

Three surveys completed concurrently with the development of the Preservation Plan helped to elevate community interest in the project. These included a reconnaissance survey of 750 historic standing structures in the County and a reconnaissance survey of 200 historic African American standing structures. The development of Preliminary Information Forms (a reconnaissance level survey) for Round Hill, Purcellville, Hamilton and Lovettsville was presented to the respective towns and they are currently working with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to determine the eligibility for establishing historic districts. Since the surveys, the Town of Purcellville has established a National Register District and the Towns of Hamilton, Lovettsville and Round Hill are evaluating their eligibility.

Nobody spoke in opposition to the Plan at the Board (December 2, 2003) or Planning Commission (October 8, 2003) hearings.

B. Summary of Proposed Amendments

While the Board of Supervisors directed that the Plan be implemented as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan, the Board also asked the Planning Commission to identify editorial and minor changes to ensure that the document reflected any changed circumstances since its adoption.

The Commission was to consider adding language that explicitly noted Civil War battlefields and to provide guidance on how best to protect these resources. A committee formed by the Board, the *Citizens Committee for the Historic Calvary Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville*, proposed language. This committee, worked with the Planning Commission over several meetings to explain the current effort to heighten awareness of several key battlefields in the County and to insert language and policies. This new text represents the most significant change to the Plan and as a result, Chapter Five, Heritage Corridors, was re-titled Cultural Landscapes to reflect the additional of battlefield language and policies.

The battlefield policies parallel policies related to other heritage resources; encouraging identification and protection, education and public outreach, and incorporation into County tourism programs.

The Commission also examined the role of the Heritage Commission and added text to elaborate on the role of the Commission to facilitate Plan implementation by the County and private groups. Recommendations about the Heritage Commission membership and operation were provided to the Board in separate documents.

The proposed amendments support the *Journey Through Hallowed Ground* Heritage Area and propose that the County will support private conservation efforts.

Archaeological policies now include details about how a Phase One survey should be conducted; suggesting 50-foot intervals for shovel tests unless another standard is agreed by staff.

C. Overall Analysis

The most significant proposed change to the Plan is the addition of information and policy direction regarding Civil War battlefields. The policies and text added to Chapter 5 propose the same preservation techniques as other resources discussed in the Plan. The principles adopted with the Plan in 2003 are not changed by the proposed amendments.

The Preservation Plan itself does not have an immediate fiscal impact on the County. Potential costs will be associated with implementation proposals considered as part of the County's budget processes when such proposals are brought forward. The principle implementation tool, as noted by the Commission during its review, is the Heritage Commission. The Commission is an advisory body of interested stakeholders who can bridge government and private preservation efforts and broaden the opportunities to implement the Plan. The status of other implementation approaches is outlined below.

Resource inventory

An inventory of heritage properties aids in identifying and determining the value of the resource and its eligibility for Federal, State and local tax relief programs. The County will offer educational and technical support for property owners interested in evaluating their resources. Currently, required archaeological surveys submitted with development applications are the main source of new data.

Maintaining or improving property

Several policies of the Plan speak to providing design assistance to landowners. This objective is being addressed through legislative application review as part of the green infrastructure design. Identified sites are being evaluated and where possible preserved as part of new development.

Historic districts

The Plan recommendation that historic district review guidelines be updated has been accomplished with the adoption of the revised design guidelines in 2008. The Plan also recommends modifying the existing historic district overlay zoning boundaries to align with State and National Register Historic District boundaries. That effort has not yet been scheduled. The process to create new historic overlay zoning districts and to have property removed from an historic district is unchanged.

III. CONCLUSION

The proposed changes fulfill the Board's direction to make minor editorial changes that reflect changed circumstances since the 2003 adoption. The most significant policy change reflects Board direction to consider language and policies specifically addressing Civil War battlefields. The battlefield language continues to reflect the fundamental strategy behind the Plan: identification, education, and responsible promotion.

IV. ATTACHMENTS (Unless noted otherwise, attachments are not available electronically but may be obtained from the Department of Planning)	PAGE NUMBER
1. Board of Supervisors Intent to Amend	A-1
2. Draft Heritage Preservation Plan with changes noted.	
3. Draft Heritage Preservation Plan Final Version	
Please note that both the edited and final versions of the Heritage Preservation Plan may be viewed online at http://www.loudoun.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=574	